

## **Pre-college Philosophy lesson 7 - Free Will**

### **Maddy, Addison, Sam**

**Goal:** Have the students think more critically about whether or not they have free will. Is everything predetermined or do we actually have free will? Explore the nature of determinism and free will.

**Intro:** Names and if you could live anywhere in the world other than where you live now, where would that be?

#### **First Activity: Define Free Will**

- Do you think you have free will? Define it
- Ask the students what they think Free Will is
  - Something along the lines of: "We each act freely and of our own accord at all times"
- Is free will useful? Why/why not?
  - Is free will necessarily good? Bad? (what does good mean here?)
- When do you feel like you are exercising free will in your life? When do you feel like you are not?

#### **Second Activity: Simon Says**

- Play Simon Says with the students, tell them there is an incentive for winning.
- Give more and more outrageous commands, eliminating students as you go.
  - Examples: Simon says spin in a circle, Simon says smack the table, Simon says clap... Simon says eat the gum under the desk (Stop them before they do this! Remaining students win)
- Plot twist! There is no prize. Life is unfair! You did this for nothing.
- Why did you want to win? Why did you follow commands? What about the promise of a reward influenced you to play and win? Was it your past experiences with rewards?
- What did you not want to win? Why did you resist the commands? What made you lose? Was it your past experiences that prohibited you from winning? Did you decide to lose? Why? Was that your choice?
- Why hesitate?
  - Is choosing not to play an exercise of free will if we already consider such an action (say making you lose immediately)?

**Randomness Activity (if students are leaning heavily towards determinism, use as necessary): Was some random action fate? Predetermined?**

- Throw pen across the room apparently randomly, or random clap, do something unrelated to the current situation
  - Ask Why did I do this? As a proposition in favor of free will
- Is sports betting free will? Gambling?
  - Does your knowledge of the game impact the status of your free will?  
Does someone else's?